

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, EF, SA

SUBJECT: SAUDI DEMARCHE ON UN MIDDLE EAST DEBATE

1. SUMMARY: SAUDI AMBASSADOR, WHO IS ATTENDING CURRENT SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE, RETURNED FROM NEW YORK TO MEET WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SOBER JANUARY 13 TO EXPRESS SAG WISH THAT USG WILL BE ABLE TO SUPPORT -- OR AT LEAST NOT VETO -- RESOLUTION RESULTING FROM UN SECURITY COUNCIL ME DEBATE. ATHERTON EXPLAINED USG FEELING THAT RESOLUTION CHANGING, AMPLIFYING OR EXPRESSING INTERPRETATIONS OF RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338, OR CALLING FOR PLO PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA CONFERENCE, WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO USG, WHICH HELD THAT THE QUESTION OF PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS A
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QUESTION TO BE DECIDED IN THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS, AND NOT PREJUDGED BY SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. ATHERTON CONCLUDED THAT REGARDLESS OF OUTCOME OF UN DEBATE, IT WAS

USG'S FIRM INTENTION THAT THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS MOVE FORWARD AND THAT WE WOULD BE WORKING FOR THIS BEGINNING WITH RABIN VISIT LATER THIS MONTH. END SUMMARY.

2. SAUDI AMBASSADOR ALIREZA, ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM JIDDA, MET WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT

SECRETARY SOBER TO DISCUSS UN MIDDLE EAST DEBATE ON JANUARY 13. AMBASSADOR ALIREZA BEGAN BY STATING THAT HE BELIEVED THE OPENING PLO SPEECH IN NEW YORK HAD BEEN A MODERATE ONE, IF ONE COULD LOOK BEYOND THE USUAL ATTACKS ON THE UN, IMPERIALISM, AND ZIONISM. THE SPEECH HAD BEEN PUBLICIZED, AND IT WAS NATURAL TO EXPECT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PLAYING TO THE AUDIENCE. ALIREZA, READING AT THIS POINT FROM A CABLE RECEIVED FROM THE SAG FOREIGN MINISTRY IN JIDDA, STATED THAT THE ARABS WOULD BE OBJECTIVE AT THE UNITED NATIONS. SINCE THE UNITED STATES HAD PREVIOUSLY DECLARED THAT A SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT ACCOUNTING FOR PALESTINIAN INTERESTS, THE SAG HOPES THAT THE RESOLUTION RESULTING FROM THE DEBATE WILL WIN US SUPPORT OR WILL AT LEAST NOT BE VETOED.

3. COMMENTING ON HIS OWN OBSERVATIONS IN NEW YORK, AMBASSADOR ALIREZA STATED THAT WHILE HE HAD HEARD FROM SAUDI SOURCES TALK OF A UNITED ARAB RESOLUTION, NO ONE IN NEW YORK SEEMED TO KNOW ABOUT SUCH A RESOLUTION. HE HAD HEARD THAT EGYPT WOULD PROPOSE A DRAFT RESOLUTION, BUT THE EGYPTIANS HAD THUS FAR NOT DISCUSSED IT WITH OTHERS, TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE. THE SAG EXPECTED THAT ANY RESOLUTION WOULD CONTAIN THREE ELEMENTS, STATED ALIREZA: (1) WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES; (2) A SOLUTION TO THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE, THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, BY RECOGNIZING THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO SELF-DETERMINATION; AND (3) THE FORMATION OF A STATE OF PALESTINE. THE AIM OF THIS DEBATE IS TO MOVE THE ENTIRE PROBLEM CLOSER TO A PEACEFUL SOLUTION WITHOUT GIVING THE US REASON TO USE ITS VETO.

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4. MR. ATHERTON AFFIRMED THE USG RECOGNITION THAT THERE CAN BE NO SETTLEMENT WHICH DOES NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. A WAY MUST BE FOUND TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF THE PALESTINIANS, AS WELL AS A WAY OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF WITHDRAWAL, RECOGNITION AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS. THE USG IS CONCERNED, SAID MR. ATHERTON, THAT A RESOLUTION RESULTING FROM THE UN DEBATE MIGHT ALTER IN A MANNER NOT ACCEPTABLE TO ONE OR MORE OF THE PARTIES THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION PREVIOUSLY AGREED UPON. THE USG WISHES TO SEE THE PRESENT DEBATE END WITHOUT CHANGING PREVIOUSLY ACCEPTED TERMS OF REFERENCE

SO THAT THE USG CAN CONTINUE TO MOVE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD.
WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT NOT TO UPSET THE FRAMEWORK
ESTABLISHED BY RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338. MR. ATHERTON
STATED THAT THE USG WAS PREPARED AND DETERMINED TO MOVE THE
NEGOTIATING PROCESS FORWARD AGAIN AND WOULD RENEW THESE

EFFORTS DURING THE COMING VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER RABIN
LATER THIS MONTH. MR. ATHERTON STRESSED THAT OUR POSITION
DID NOT MEAN THAT THE USG MIGHT DISAGREE WITH NEW IDEAS
PER SE, BUT THAT IT WOULD DISAGREE WITH NEW PROPOSALS
BEING PUT FORWARD IN A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION,
BELIEVING THAT THE ACTUAL NEGOTIATION PROCESS ITSELF
WAS THE PLACE TO ADVANCE MATTERS. THE USG WOULD NOT
PREJUDGE ANY RESOLUTION WHICH MIGHT BE OFFERED, BUT
WE WANTED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE WOULD FIND IT
NECESSARY TO OPPOSE ANY RESOLUTION WHICH ALTERED IN
SUBSTANTIVE WAYS RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338.

5. MR. ATHERTON CONTINUED THAT ONE IDEA WHICH THE USG
WOULD BE UNABLE TO ACCEPT WOULD BE A SECURITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION CALLING FOR PLO PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA.
THE 1973 LETTER OF INVITATION TO THE PARTIES TO THE GENEVA
CONFERENCE EXPLICITLY SAYS THAT THE QUESTION OF
ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE PARTIES
THEMSELVES. A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION CALLING FOR
PLO PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA WOULD PREJUDGE THIS ISSUE.
WHILE THE USG WOULD AGREE TO A DISCUSSION AT GENEVA OF
THE PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION QUESTION, IT COULD NOT
DO SO AS A RESULT OF A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WHICH

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WOULD THUS PREJUDGE A DECISION THE NEGOTIATING PARTIES
SHOULD MAKE. WE HOLD THIS POSITION OUT OF A DESIRE TO
PRESERVE THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, A PROCESS WHICH MIGHT
BE FROZEN SHOULD ONE SIDE ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE NEW
INTERPRETATIONS OR CONDITIONS NOT MUTUALLY AGREED UPON
BY ALL PARTIES TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. MR. ATHERTON
STATED THAT HE WISHED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IF THE USG
FOUND IT NECESSARY TO VETO A RESOLUTION, THAT WE ARE
NEVERTHELESS FULLY DETERMINED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS MUST
STILL MOVE FORWARD, AND WE WILL USE OUR INFLUENCE TO THAT
END.

6. AMBASSADOR ALIREZA ASKED MR. ATHERTON FOR HIS PERSONAL
ASSESSMENT OF THE BEST WAY TO RESOLVE THE DEBATE. MR.
ATHERTON RESPONDED THAT THE USG HAS NO RESOLUTION OF ITS
OWN TO PRESENT, BUT THAT A RESOLUTION WHICH REAFFIRMS
RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 AND CALLS FOR A RESUMPTION OF
NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA ON THAT BASIS WOULD BE THE BEST
OUTCOME. HE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH A RESOLUTION
WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO SYRIA, WHICH WOULD

EXPECT MORE. MR. ATHERTON EMPHASIZED THAT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE USG THINKS THAT ALL PROPOSALS WHICH MAY BE PUT FORWARD IN NEW YORK WILL BE IMMODERATE, BUT ONLY THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL IF ADOPTED AS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS. MR. ATHERTON STATED THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT THERE MIGHT BE A SYRIAN-PLO DRAFT PRESENTED. ALIREZA REPLIED THAT IF THIS WERE SO, IT IS BEING DISCUSSED PRIVATELY, AND THAT NO SUCH DRAFT WAS PRESENTED AT THE MEETING OF ARAB DELEGATIONS ON JANUARY 12.

7. AT THIS POINT A BRIEF DISCUSSION ENSUED AS TO WHETHER IT WAS NECESSARY TO VOTE ON JANUARY 12 ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE PLO SHOULD BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEBATE. AFTER AN EXAMINATION OF THE RESOLUTION OF NOVEMBER 30 AND THE UNILATERAL STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL IT WAS AGREED THAT WHILE THE RESOLUTION CALLED FOR DISCUSSIONS "TO CONTINUE THE DEBATE ON THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION" THE PLO HAD NOT AT THAT TIME BEEN FORMALLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE. THE US HAD OPPOSED THE PROCEDURES UTILIZED ON JANUARY 12 BECAUSE THAT APPEARED TO GIVE THE
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PLO THE STATUS OF A STATE, WHEREAS DIFFERENT PROCEDURES HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN USED TO ALLOW REPRESENTATIVES OF SUCH POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE.

8. MR. SOBER EMPHASIZED AT THIS POINT OUR WISH THAT NOTHING HAPPEN TO UNDERMINE THE FOUNDATION FOR NEGOTIATIONS SO CAREFULLY BUILT UP. ALIREZA REPLIED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE USG CONCERN NOT TO DO ANYTHING WHICH WOULD MAKE THE ISRAELIS NOT COME TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. HE HOPED, HOWEVER, THAT WE WOULD CONSIDER THE POSSIBLE EFFECT ON EGYPT, JORDAN AND SYRIA OF A USG VETO OF A RESOLUTION. WOULD IT NOT BE EQUALLY BAD TO HAVE THREE STATES ON THE OTHER SIDE DISSATISFIED? MR. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT IT WOULD ADMITTEDLY BE DIFFICULT TO GO DIRECTLY TO GENEVA FOLLOWING A US VETO. ALL MOVES TO GENEVA WOULD REQUIRE MUCH PREPARATION THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. MR. ATHERTON STATED THAT THE USG WOULD BEGIN THIS PROCESS AS SOON AS PRIME MINISTER RABIN COMES TO WASHINGTON, AND STATED HIS HOPE THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE WOULD LEAVE US IN A POSITION FROM WHICH WE WOULD HAVE SOME CHANCE OF SUCCESS. AMBASSADOR ALIREZA ASKED IF MR. ATHERTON WOULD CONSENT TO HIS PASSING ASSURANCES TO THE SAG THAT THE USG WOULD TAKE AN INITIATIVE TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS FOLLOWING THE SC DEBATE. MR. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT IT WAS OUR ABSOLUTE AND FIRM INTENTION TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO REVIVE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT THAT HE COULD OBVIOUSLY NOT GUARANTEE ONE-HUNDRED PER CENT THE OUTCOME IN ADVANCE. ALIREZA ASKED IF IT WOULD BE

POSSIBLE TO TAKE SOME SUCH ACTION BEFORE A VOTE IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. MR. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT, UNFORTUNATELY, THINK THIS NOW POSSIBLE SINCE ALL ATTENTION IS NOW FOCUSED ON THE UN DEBATE AND EVERYONE WILL WANT TO AWAIT ITS OUTCOME.

9. ALIREZA THANKED MR. ATHERTON FOR THIS STATEMENT OF THE US POSITION. HE COMMENTED THAT HE MIGHT SEE DR. RASHAD PHARAON IN NEW YORK ON JANUARY 14. DR. PHARAON WOULD BE EN ROUTE TO SAUDI ARABIA FOLLOWING A MEDICAL CHECK-UP AT CLEVELAND. A MEETING WOULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DR. PHARAON TO CONVEY ORALLY TO SAUDI OFFICIALS SOME OF THE NUANCES OF THE USG POSITION AS

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UNDERSTOOD BY AMBASSADOR ALIREZA. KISSINGER

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